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SUBJECT: MINISTER KOSTI: HUMANITARIAN ACCESS IMPROVING

1. SUMMARY: (SBU) In a September 15 courtesy call with CDA Fernandez, Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Kosti Manibe reported that humanitarian access inside Sudan was improving, and that no travel permits for NGO workers were required outside of Darfur. The case of the CARE country director was still being reviewed, he said. CDA urged Kosti in his role as an SPLM minister to protect the CPA, which was still vulnerable to outside attacks like those printed in the sensationalist newspaper Al-Intibaha. End summary.

CARE CASE UNDER REVIEW

2. (SBU) On expelled CARE country director Paul Barker, Kosti said that the ministry was conducting internal consultations and would be communicating with the regional director of CARE shortly. CDA welcomed this, noting that it would serve the government well to be as transparent as possible. Without dialogue and clear explanations, the international community was prone to think the worst of the Sudanese government in such matters. "International NGOs can be partners with the government," CDA pointed out, since they were able to judge and report on progress on the ground.

NO PERMITS REQUIRED FOR TRAVEL OUTSIDE DARFUR

3. (SBU) Despite administrative hitches, Kosti said that he thought the humanitarian access situation in Sudan was improving. He cited substantial progress in areas outside of Darfur, claiming some reduction in the restriction of movement for humanitarian workers. Kosti also said that Darfur was the only region requiring a special travel permit; INGOs were authorized to freely travel throughout all other parts of the country. That national security officers had recently been demanding to see permits for travel to Juba was a mistake, he said; not even NISS Director General Salah Ghosh knew what was going on. When CDA asked whether this was also true for diplomats, Kosti hesitated. "Sometimes it's a security matter," he said.

PROGRESS IN SOME AREAS, BUT CPA STILL VULNERABLE

4. (SBU) CDA called the resolution of the travel permit issue a positive step, as was the recent transfer of Suleiman Jamous to a medical facility in Chad. While there was also forward movement on implementing UNSCR 1769, much more progress needed to be made on CPA issues like Abyei SAF redeployment and border delineation; these needed to be negotiated to the satisfaction of both the NCP and the SPLM.

5. (SBU) The atmosphere surrounding the CPA was poisoned, CDA said, and alleged NCP tools like daily newspaper Al-Intibaha only added fuel to the fire. Kosti said that the SPLM had recently been

discussing that particular paper, and planned to raise their concerns with the NCP. (Note: Last fall the SPLM sued the newspaper for promoting religious and racial hatred. End note.) The newspaper's management acted outside "all bounds of responsibility," he said. Kosti also mentioned that a new press law would soon be introduced, and hoped that the press council would be able to set reasonable limits on incitement in reporting. "We want freedom with responsibility," he said. CDA agreed and hope that "whoever is really behind such a publication" would realize that such poison is dangerous for Sudan's future and stability.

FERNANDEZ